

Born in San Diego and raised in Whittier, Ralph attended Whittier College before enlisting in the Navy during World War II. He served in the Pacific Theater from Guadalcanal to Okinawa. "There were 13 major battles and I was in 12 of them," he once recalled. "It was a long ordeal."

When the war ended in 1945, Ralph Klaasen returned to his parents' house in Dana Point. He went to work in San Clemente and worked for the city for a short period in the 1940's but spent most of his career working in banking for Bank of America, Laguna Federal Savings and Great American while raising a family in town.

As Laguna Federal's longtime branch manager, Ralph was involved in community events and local charities. In 1975, the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce saluted him as the city's Citizen of the Year.

He retired in 1985 but continued to contribute to his community. In 2001, the city honored him on San Clemente's Wall of Recognition.

Ralph's dedication to his community is a testament to a life lived well and a legacy that will continue. I extend my condolences to Ralph's family and friends; although Ralph may be gone, the light and goodness he brought to the world remain and will never be forgotten.

MILITARY HONORS FOR OUR
NATION'S HEROES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, please join me in supporting a bill which I have introduced, "Providing Military Honors For Our Nation's Heroes Act," H.R. 3886, to reimburse expenses of volunteers who provide military funeral honors at veterans' funerals.

Because thousands of service members are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan while thousands of World War II and Korean War veterans die each day, there is simply not enough military available to provide a proper funeral detail for these funerals. Some families of veterans have had to "make do" with a CD playing taps. I am saddened by this outrageous situation and determined to provide proper military funeral honors for all families who request them.

This bill will allow reimbursement to volunteers from members of veterans' service orga-

nizations, VSOs, and other organizations approved by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, VA. Transportation costs and other expenses, such as cleaning uniforms, incurred in providing funeral honors details will be reimbursed. A second change will allow reimbursement to details that are requested by funeral homes and the VA, as well as the Department of Defense.

Currently, members of VSOs and other volunteers can assist the military by providing a color guard, pallbearers, a bugler or firing party, but the law does not address ceremonies in which VSOs render honors without military representation. My bill will allow volunteers to be reimbursed even when no military person is a part of the honor guard. This change will increase the number of honors details available to families.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 2996—Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010.

Requesting Member: Congressman KEVIN BRADY, Texas 8th Congressional District

Bill Number: H.R. 2996—Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010

Project: Big Thicket National Preserve
Account: National Park Service, Land Acquisition

Requesting Entity: The Conservation Fund, Texas Office

Address of Requesting Entity: 101 W 6th Street, Suite 601, Austin, TX

The Big Thicket National Preserve is one of America's ecological treasures. It is an unusually shaped preserve whose boundaries include land once owned by major timber companies. This funding represents the final year in a seven year land acquisition program. This request enables the National Park Service to acquire critical land within the congressionally authorized boundary of the Big Thicket National Preserve to diversify the economic potential of southeast Texas through increased tourism opportunities. This project works only with voluntary, "willing-seller" landowners.

The \$5,000,000 for this project included in this final conference report combined with previous funding will allow the National Park Service to purchase over 2500 acres of land on 23 tracts acquired from willing sellers or by voluntary donation.

H.R. 3619, COAST GUARD
AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. DANIEL B. MAFFEI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. MAFFEI. Madam Speaker, I would like to express my support for H.R. 3619, the Coast Guard Authorization Act. This is an important bill with many essential provisions, and I would like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for all of their hard work. This legislation authorizes \$10 billion in Fiscal Year 2010 funding for the Coast Guard, while also including several important provisions such as cruise vessel safety and port security. Congress has instructed the Coast Guard to do more and more in recent years, yet has not provided them the funding necessary to accomplish these objectives. This legislation provides the Coast Guard with the resources to meet Congressional directives. Unfortunately, I was unable to vote on this legislation, as I was on official business back in my district with HUD Secretary Donovan. I assure you that, if I was able to be here in Washington, I would have voted for this important legislation.

H.R. 3619 does a great deal to improve national security. The legislation improves on port security, and directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a report on the threat of a terrorist attack on gas or chemical cargo shipments. Additionally, the Coast Guard Authorization Act combats alien smuggling by authorizing punishment for anyone who is bringing in people who are considered to be in the United States illegally. Provisions such as these are important for protecting our country from the threat of terrorism and ensuring our citizens are safe.

Once again, I would like to commend Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA on this strong legislation, and voice my support for H.R. 3619, the Coast Guard Authorization Act.